Sensory Overload During a Bicycle Commute

Traits

- **Note: based on patterns, not diagnosis. Includes excluded and potential ones.**
- Sensory Processing Differences
  - Sensory Overload
    - Hypersensitivity to noise and smells
    - Overwhelm in busy environments
  - Sensory Defensiveness
    - Strong reactions to specific sensory stimuli
- Autism Spectrum Traits
  - Sensory Sensitivities
  - Routine and Predictability
    - Stress from unexpected changes (e.g., road closure)
  - Emotional Regulation Challenges
    - Difficulty managing emotional responses to sensory overload
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Traits
  - Emotional Reactivity
    - Intense emotional responses to stimuli
  - Executive Function Challenges
    - Difficulty with planning and decision-making under stress
- Anxiety Disorders
  - Generalised Anxiety
    - Persistent worry and stress about time and unexpected events
  - Panic Attacks
    - Physical symptoms like increased heart rate and shaky legs
  - Agoraphobia
    - Fear of crowded or open spaces and situations perceived as difficult to escape
- Trauma-Related Conditions
  - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
    - Trauma response to loud noises
    - Flashbacks and physiological reactions to triggers
  - Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD)
    - Emotional dysregulation and heightened threat perception
- Misophonia
  - Selective Sound Sensitivity
    - Strong emotional reactions to specific sounds
- Phonophobia
  - Fear of Loud Sounds
    - Fear and anxiety related to loud noises
- Auditory-Tactile Synaesthesia
  - Cross-Sensory Experiences
    - Physical sensations in response to certain sounds
- Alexithymia
  - Difficulty Identifying Emotions
    - Challenges in articulating and understanding emotional states
- Emotional Dysregulation
  - Intense Emotional Responses
    - Difficulty managing and regulating emotional reactions
  - Meltdowns
    - Overwhelm leading to loss of control and intense emotional outbursts
- Comorbidities and Overlapping Traits
  - Dyspraxia
    - Challenges with coordination and spatial awareness
  - Dyslexia
    - Difficulties with reading and processing written information
- Coping Mechanisms and Strategies
  - Sensory Regulation
    - Use of nature and physical activity for sensory balance
  - Avoidance Strategies
    - Avoiding rush hour and busy streets to minimize sensory overload and anxiety

Conclusion

- Honest Reflection
  - Difficulty resolving with optimism
  - Importance of honesty in sharing experiences
- Inability to cope alone
  - **Need help**

The Commute Story

- Setting
  - Sunny morning bicycle commute
  - Commuting to catch a train
- Initial State
  - Feeling pressure to be on time while plenty of time
  - Comparison to the White Rabbit from 'Alice in Wonderland'
- Unexpected Road Closure
  - Challenge
    - No prior warning signs or diversion routes
    - U-turn and busier route
  - Impact
    - Increased stress
    - Sensory overload from busier route
- The Intersection
  - Sensory Overload
    - Busy, noisy, and smelly avenue
    - Unpredictable wait time at crossing
  - Emotional Response
    - Anxiety and racing thoughts
    - Feeling stuck in a bad action movie
- The Honking Incident
  - Event
    - Frustrated motorist honking three times
    - Reaction: hitting the back of the car
  - Physical and Emotional Impact
    - Heart rate jumped to 185 bpm
    - Shaky legs and inability to stand
    - Strong knot in stomach

Analysis

- Understanding the Impact
  - Challenges
    - Unexpected changes and sensory overload
    - Emotional reactivity and potential meltdowns
  - Navigating the World
    - Like navigating a minefield blindfolded
- The Noise Sensitivity
  - Reaction to Honking
    - Fight-flight-freeze or panic response
    - Consistent reaction to specific honking patterns
  - Physiological Aftermath
    - Tight stomach, shaky legs, mental fog
    - Interference with thinking and planning
- Investigations into Sensory Reactions
  - Misophonia
    - Intense emotional reactions to certain sounds
    - Excluded: only partial match
  - Phonophobia
    - Fear of loud sounds
    - Excluded: no match
  - Auditory-Tactile Synaesthesia
    - Sounds felt as physical sensations
    - Seemed to match
    - Challenged: no match (not all sounds match)
- Observations
  - Distant vs. Close-Range Honking
    - Different reactions and management challenges
  - Impact of Noise-Cancelling Headphones
    - Ineffectiveness against honking sounds
- Amnesia Flashback
  - Traumatic Event
    - Loud honking at a train station
    - Physical pain and ear aching
  - Re-Connection to Misophonia
    - Misophonia for distant honking matched
    - Traumatic Event suspected trigger for misophonia
    - Fear of exposure and anxiety of close-range honking (from just "bad luck")

Presented with xmind